

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0855

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LONDON FOR HAVERKAMP

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SEDU, KE

SUBJECT: UNIVERSITY FUNCTIONING NORMALLY AFTER ROCKY START

REF: NAIROBI 10777 OF DEC. 31, 1974 (NOTAL)

1. UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI AND KENYATTA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, CLOSED SINCE AUGUST 14, 1974, REOPENED JANUARY 6 AMIDST CONTINUING STUDENT DISPLEASURE OVER LACK OF PROGRESS ON STUDENT GRIEVANCES (TEACHER SHORTAGE, CROWDED LIVING CONDITIONS, AND ABSENCE OF DIALOGUE WITH ADMINISTRATION) AND EXPULSION OF NUMBER OF STUDENT LEADERS. UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS COUNTERED INITIAL REFUSAL OF LARGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS TO RE-REGISTER BY DENYING THEM ENTRY INTO DINING AND LODGING FACILITIES. WHEN STUDENTS THE BOYCOTTED CLASSES AND HELD IMPROMPTU MEETINGS THEY WERE REMINDED OF THEIR WRITTEN AGREEMENT TO ATTEND CLASSES AND NOT HOLD UNAUTHORIZED DEMONSTRATIONS (REFTEL). STERN WARNING WAS ISSUED THREATENING STUDENTS WHO CONTINUED BOYCOTT WITH EXPULSION AND POSSIBLE ARREST FOR DEFIANCE SEPARATE PRESIDENTIAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BAN ON ALL STRIKES. AT THIS POINT STUDENTS CAVED IN AND BY

JAN. 9 CLASS ATTENDANCE WAS NEAR NORMAL.

2. SOME UNIVERSITY SOURCES BELIEVE QUIET EFFORTS NOW UNDERWAY BEHIND SCENES TO REDRESS SOME STUDENT GRIEVANCES. RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF BANNED STUDENT UNION ALSO REGARDED AS REAL POSSIBILITY IN NEXT FEW WEEKS. FUTURE OF UNPOPULAR VICE CHANCELLOR KARANJA, HOWEVER, REMAINS IN DOUBT. HIGH CIRCULATION DAILY NATION, IN JAN. 4 EDITORIAL, ATTACKED KARANJA'S ADMINISTRATION AS QTE ARROGANT AND INSENSITIVE UNQTE IN DEALING WITH STUDENTS' COMPLAINTS. NATION URGED KARANJA TO BECOME MORE RESPONSIVE OR RESIGN.

3. COMMENT: WHILE OUTLOOK FOR CONTINUED CALM AT UNIVERSITY STILL UNCERTAIN, FACT THAT STUDENT GRIEVANCES MAY SOON RECEIVE ATTENTION IS HOPEFUL SIGN. MAJORITY OF STUDENTS, UNHAPPILY IDLED FOR NEARLY FIVE MONTHS, APPEAR EAGER TO RESUME STUDIES AND AVOID RENEWED CONFRONTATION. IN ADDITION, STUDENT LEADERS MAY HESITATE BEFORE FORFEITING RARE MEDIA AND PUBLIC SYMPATHY THEY NOW ENJOY. SHOULD UNREST RETURN, UNIVERSITY SITUATION LIKELY TO BECOME MAJOR ISSUE WHEN REOPENING OF PARLIAMENT IN LATE JANUARY - EARLY FEBRUARY GIVES NOW QUIESCENT GOK CRITICS A FORUM.
MARSHALL

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